

How to interpret today's vote...

The context

Today's rebellion over Foundation Hospitals is just the latest evidence of a growing habit of rebellion within the PLP.

Just under 200 Labour MPs have rebelled against the Government at least once since 2001.

Including today's over Foundation Hospitals, there have been rebellions by Labour MPs in 130 divisions so far this Parliament. That constitutes a rebellion in 17.6 per cent of votes. As the table below shows, this is a higher percentage than in the first two sessions of *any* other post-war Parliament.

<i>Parliament</i>	<i>Rebellions as a % of divisions</i>
2001	17.6
1983	17.4
1970	16.2
1992	16.1
19740	13.7
1987	12.3
1959	12.2
1979	7.8
1974F	7.3
1945	5.6
1997	5.0
1966	3.8
1950	2.1
1955	1.5
1951	0.4
1964	0.3

That said, most of the rebellions have been small. The Government faces a rebellion roughly every five votes, but it suffers a large rebellion – of 30 or more backbenchers – roughly every 33 votes. The average size of the rebellions – as a percentage of the parliamentary party – is now less than half that of the 1970s. So Labour MPs may therefore be rebelling more often than they did in the 1960s and 1970s, but they are not (yet at least) rebelling in anywhere near the same quantity.

The Bill

Today's rebellion is the sixth backbench revolt during the Bill's passage.

In May, 65 Labour MPs supported a Reasoned Amendment declining to give the Bill a Second Reading. The subsequent Second Reading vote then attracted a

substantial rebellion of 31. One Labour MP, Jeremy Corbyn, then went on to rebel over the Bill's programme motion.

In July, the Government's majority fell to 35 when 62 Labour MPs supported a Report Stage amendment calling for the removal of the foundation hospitals clauses from the Bill. A further rebellion the same day saw one Labour MP, Patrick Hall, rebel over a different issue.

July's rebellion was widely (but erroneously) reported as the lowest parliamentary majority since 1997. In February 1999, the Government had been ambushed during the passage of the Rating (Valuation) Bill resulting in an even lower majority, scrapping in with a majority of just 25, ten smaller than over Foundation Hospitals.

The rebels

Crucially, May and July's rebels were not the same people. Taking just the two previous key rebellions – the Reasoned Amendment in May and the Report Stage vote in July – a total of 80 Labour MPs had voted against the Government over this issue before today's vote. These are listed in the table at the end of this paper. A total of 47 voted against at both Second Reading and Report Stage, with 18 who voted against in May not doing so in July, and 15 who did not vote against in May doing so in July.

The maths of this is really simple. It means that even without persuading any new rebels to vote against, if the opponents of Foundation Hospitals could persuade all of those who have already voted against to vote against today, then the Government would lose. However, given that some of those who have voted against previously have said that they are not willing to do so again, the rebels will need to find new MPs prepared to vote against.

Points of comparison

- Any rebellion of over 65 cross-votes will be the largest domestic rebellion against Blair since 2001.
- Any rebellion of over 67 cross-votes will be the largest domestic rebellion against Blair since 1997.
- Any rebellion of over 75 will be bigger than that faced by any Labour government up to 1974.
- Any rebellion of over 110 will be the largest domestic rebellion against the whip faced by any Labour Government.
- Any rebellion of over 139 will be the largest rebellion against the whip of any Government since the dawn of modern party politics.

- A majority of less than 35 will be the smallest as a result of a rebellion since 1997.
- A majority of less than 25 will be the smallest on a whipped vote since 1997.
- A government defeat will be the first on a whipped vote (excluding the two votes on Select Committee membership in 2001) since the Blair Government was elected.

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The rebels

	Reasoned Amendment (May)	Second Reading (May)	Reasoned Amendment (July)
Diane Abbott	X	X	X
Graham Allen	X	-	-
John Austin	X	X	X
Harry Barnes	X	X	X
Andrew Bennett	X	X	X
Roger Berry	X	-	X
Harold Best	-	-	X
Colin Burgon	X	-	-
Martin Caton	-	-	X
Michael Clapham	X	-	X
Tony Clarke	-	-	X
Iain Coleman	X	-	X
Michael Connarty	X	X	X
Frank Cook	-	-	X
Jeremy Corbyn	X	X	X
Tom Cox	X	-	-
John Cryer	X	-	-
Jim Cunningham	X	-	-
Ian Davidson	X	X	X
Janet Dean	X	-	-
Andrew Dismore	X	-	-
Jim Dobbin	X	X	X
Frank Dobson	X	X	X
Julia Drown	X	X	-
Gwyneth Dunwoody	X	X	X
Angela Eagle	X	-	X
Clive Efford	X	X	X
Louise Ellman	X	-	X
Bill Etherington	-	-	X
Mark Fisher	X	X	X
Paul Flynn	-	-	X
Neil Gerrard	X	-	X
Dr Ian Gibson	-	-	X
Dai Havard	X	-	X
Doug Henderson	X	-	X
David Heyes	X	-	X
David Hinchcliffe	X	X	X
Kate Hoey	X	-	X
Kelvin Hopkins	X	X	X
Lindsay Hoyle	-	-	X
Joan Humble	-	-	X
Eric Illsley	X	-	-
Glenda Jackson	X	X	X
Dr Lynne Jones	X	X	X
Helen Jones	X	-	X

Kevan Jones	X	-	-
Alan Keen	X	-	X
Peter Kilfoyle	X	X	X
Andy King	X	-	X
Terry Lewis	X	X	X
Tony Lloyd	X	-	X
Alice Mahon	X	X	X
Robert Marshall-Andrews	X	X	-
Jim Marshall	X	-	-
Christine McCafferty	-	-	X
John McDonnell	X	X	X
George Mudie	X	X	X
Dr Doug Naysmith	X	-	X
Linda Perham	X	-	-
Stephen Pound	X	-	-
Gordon Prentice	X	X	X
Gwyn Prosser	X	-	-
Ken Purchase	X	-	X
Malcolm Savidge	X	-	X
Phil Sawford	-	-	X
Brian Sedgemore	X	X	X
Clare Short	-	-	X
Alan Simpson	X	X	-
Dennis Skinner	-	-	X
Llew Smith	X	X	-
Geraldine Smith	-	-	X
Gerry Steinberg	X	-	X
George Stevenson	X	X	X
David Taylor	X	-	X
Paul Truswell	X	-	-
Dr Desmond Turner	X	X	X
Joan Walley	X	-	X
Robert Wareing	X	X	X
Betty Williams	-	-	X
Mike Wood	X	X	X

Note: X indicates a vote against the Government.